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SUBJECT: 28TH DJIBOUTIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY - GUELLEH'S PRIORITIES

**¶11. (U)** Summary: On the 27th June, after the traditional military parade, President Ismail Omar Guelleh and his wife hosted a garden party for government employees, members of Parliament, the diplomatic corps, and large numbers of the population. At the event, Guelleh gave two speeches traditional for this occasion, one in French for the international audience and one in Somali for the Djiboutian people. Speaking in French, Guelleh focused on Djibouti's economic aspirations and outlined five elements necessary for an effective and competitive economic strategy. Somalia, Darfur, Israel, the Palestinian areas, and Iraq were also main points of interest in the French speech. Speaking in Somali, Guelleh addressed regional and international issues of importance. He asked his Somali neighbors to put aside tribal differences and proceed with relocation and reconstruction. He asked the youth of Djibouti to continue their responsibility to develop the country. Guelleh also announced in his Somali speech that Djibouti would send troops to Darfur, but did not specify a time frame. End Summary.

**¶12. (U)** The festivities for Djibouti's 28th Independence Day included a military parade and a garden reception for the government and diplomatic corps. Traditionally, President Guelleh gives one speech in French targeted at both the national and international communities and one in Somali targeted only towards the Djiboutian people. Guelleh's speech in French outlined five elements necessary to an effective and competitive economic growth for Djibouti.

**¶13. (U)** Guelleh's first element was the need to invest in Djiboutians. He said Djiboutian investors need to be backed so they can perform in regional markets. The government has done an evaluation of competencies in order to improve training, push for an increase in literacy, and improve professional skills and attitudes.

**¶14. (U)** The second element was the need for Djibouti to innovate. The government will invigorate access to financing for young companies by creating appropriate financial instruments or specialized funds in capital-risks. Guelleh said the government is studying ways to facilitate procedures in order to convert the spirit of initiative into dynamic enterprises, concrete action, enhanced employment, and bring regional and international vocational exchanges back to Djibouti.

**¶15. (U)** The third element was to simplify business arrangements. Transparency and discipline plus a flexible regulation policy will allow Djibouti to reach its objectives. Guelleh said, "We should be able to offer the world of business a modern and secure judicial environment."

**¶16. (U)** The fourth element was moving the government towards regional development. This included focusing attention on regional economics through reinforcement of capacities, support for local communities, and development of Port and road infrastructures.

**¶17. (U)** The fifth element was promoting commerce and investments. With considerable investments, Djibouti will be able to support growth and create quality-based employment. By improving the economic environment, installing a competitive taxation policy, rigorous budgetary discipline, and easy access to finance, these goals will be reached.

**¶18. (U)** Guelleh reiterated his commitment to finalize regional elections before the end of 2005. He congratulated the Ethiopian leaders for allowing a peaceful electoral organization. He paid tribute to Sudanese authorities for their commitment to a peaceful resolution of South-Sudan and Darfur conflicts. Guelleh also exhorted Israel to respect international accords so Palestinian people could live in freedom in a Palestinian state where Jerusalem is its capital. He also expressed his wish to see people of Iraq attain social peace supported by the new institutions that they created.

**¶19. (U)** In Somali, he welcomed the Somali Prime Minister, Ali Mohamed Guedi, and the President of the Somali National

Assembly, Sharif Hassan Cheikh Adan, who were present in Djibouti. He encouraged the Somali leaders not to let tribal animosity compete with reconstruction priorities. He urged them to end their internal fights and proceed with relocation and reconstruction efforts.

¶10. (U) He also addressed some words to youth of Djibouti, born in 1977 and who are now mature and already have families in some cases. He told them that their elders have left them a peaceful and modern country, and the young generation must now take the lead and pursue the building of the nation. Guelleh also paid a grand tribute to the first president of Djibouti after independence, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, whose determination and sacrifice were essential to building the nation. He wished Aptidon long life and good health so he may see the fruits of his efforts.

RAGSDALE